

FIGHTERS FOR FREEDOM OF ISRAEL

D A I L Y   P R E S S   B U L L E T I N

No. 20

Tel-Aviv, 9th August, 1948

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1) RELEASE OR TRIAL.

("Mivrak")

At the time these lines reach the reader the result of the order nisi petition, lodged against the Chief of Staff of the Defence Army of Israel, will be already known. We shall know then whether the Provisional Government has any respect for the courts of justice and the rights of man or, contemptuous of both, has again eluded responsibility by using some sort of legalistic dodge.

The case of the five men detained under the British made Emergency Regulations may well prove a crucial test for the Provisional Government and seal its fate.

Emergency regulations are a potent weapon in the hands of a government. Experience has, however, shown that this weapon is double-edged. One of its razor-sharp edges is always turned towards the government holding it and threatens to behead it.

The legality of the right to deny personal liberty without giving cause or putting the person concerned on trial, is a questionable one. It is certainly very effective in intimidating a majority of the people and making it obedient, but at the same time it promotes a rebellious minority that strives to overturn the existing government with all means at its disposal.

Detention camps quickened the downfall of the British rule in our country more than any other single factor. Detainees made some attempts to defend their rights by applying to court, only to learn that courts of law are a part of the administrative machine and their functions are to justify evil and condemn the citizen. They found themselves defenceless in the face of the conviction that might is right. To give satisfaction to their bitter feeling of helpless indignation they forged a weapon of their own - the underground, and struck at the Government.

The spirit of the Jewish underground was fired not only by national sentiments; it was also fed by bitter feelings of outlaws fighting for elementary human rights.

The Provisional Government should profit by the lessons of experience and see clearly the inevitable logical chain of events. A regime that sets in motion the machinery of emergency laws must be prepared to set up gallows as well. The process ends either in the end of the government or the end of the rebels. The downfall of a government is usually a more likely outcome than the successful suppression of a revolutionary movement.

The Government must declare clearly, once for all: in the State of Israel there is no detention without giving cause. If there are cause and reason to deprive a person of its liberty, that person must stand a trial. The Government must then go to the trouble of formulating charges and producing evidence to support them. The final decision will rest with the judge. If the Government is unable to charge the accused, then it must release him. Denial of a person's freedom without trial is nothing short of a slow murder. It is tyranny. A person that has ever had an experience of detention under the Emergency Regulations will never forget it, nor forgive those who caused it.

The sensation of an unlimited power in their hands is likely to intoxicate our new and unexperienced rulers. An intoxicated person cannot be responsible for its actions. But, for its own good and the good of the people, the Provisional Government must sober, and the sooner the better. The seed it sows now will bring forth fruit. Whoever sows oppression reaps rebellion.

A recourse to legal subterfuges will only complicate the situation. The citizen will regard such practices not only as villainy, but as evidence of fear as well.

The alternatives are either to try the detainees or to release them.

2) DO NOT BE DECEIVED.

(Broadcast on 8.8.48.)

The Kol Yisrael Radio, in announcing the near arrival of the Soviet Delegation, added, apparently trying to save equilibrium, that the American Minister was also on his way to Eretz-Israel. The Government of Israel seems to be ill at ease because of the warm sympathy to the Soviet Union shown by the public, which cannot fail to appreciate the fact that the Soviet Union is the first state to send us its diplomatic mission. By stressing that U. S. is also sending us its diplomatic mission Kol Yisrael is guilty of a misrepresentation. The fact is that

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Mr. James MacDonald is not a minister, cannot be a minister for the simple reason that his Government has not yet recognized us 'de jure'. Mr. MacDonald will be here in the capacity of a mere representative. As such, his presence here, far from being a sign of our independence, will be a rude insult to our sovereignty. It will demonstrate clearly that, in the opinion of the U. S. Government, our State cannot yet be treated as a sovereign nation and is regarded as a territory with an undefined status.

The arrival of the Soviet Delegation has been made possible by our underground struggle. The arrival of the American representative has been made possible by a policy of submission, characteristic of the Jewish Agency. Therefore the arrival of the Soviet Minister is a strong evidence of our sovereignty, while the coming of the American representative - as well as that of the American observers - is a serious threat to the Jewish independence.

3) WEAKNESS IS DANGEROUS.

(Broadcast on 9.8.48.)

A foreign correspondent sent a message from Tel-Aviv to the effect that notwithstanding its apparently firm stand, the Government of Israel was not prepared to renew hostilities because of Jerusalem or the question of the Arab refugees.

We do not know what source supplied this interesting information. We wish we could brand the report as false and unfounded. Unfortunately, the behaviour of the Government seems to indicate that there is some truth in the report. In the political sphere the Government abstains from including Jerusalem in the State of Israel; in the military sphere it enforces on the troops, in the face of incessant and flagrant provocations of the Arab Legion in Jerusalem, an unexcusable and unjustifiable self-restraint. So facts tend to support the reporter's contention that our Government will not go to war because of Jerusalem.

All British manoeuvres have so far failed, but the British objective remains unchanged. In the past the enemy was searching our defences for a weak point; now he is looking for weak points in our policy, to be used as bridgeheads for political offensive. All manifestations of weakness, vacillation or readiness to compromise on the side of our Government at this juncture are likely to cause our whole political front to crumble. Any concessions made on the questions of Jerusalem or Arab refugees will be exploited as starting points for Anglo-American political pressure (to say nothing of dishonour).

The Government is urged to make it abundantly clear that it is ready to use fully its armed forces to avert any attack or attempt on our sovereignty.